

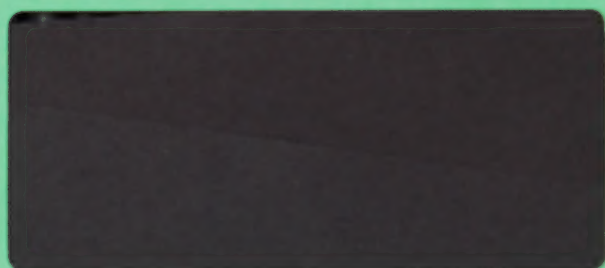
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SUBMISSION OF THE  
CANADIAN UNION OF STUDENTS  
TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON  
BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM

Ottawa, September 14, 1965

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Ottawa, September 14, 1965

This submission, prepared by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism on behalf of the Canadian Union of Students, is an outline of the relations between English-speaking and French-speaking students within the Canadian Union of Students (formerly the National Union of University Students). An analysis of this relationship, together with the prospects for the future relationship between the two groups, is also included.

No attempt is made within these pages to draw parallels to the overall Canadian scene, and it will be up to the Commission to interpret and extract what does bear a relationship to the future of Canada as a country. The basic fact is certainly evident. There is a fundamental need on the part of Canadians of every walk of life to recognize those factors which unite and those which divide Canadians of English and French backgrounds. Real discussion and action were early taken place in the area of fundamentals, in the area of education and culture rather than structures and formulas. Canada will continue to involve itself more deeply in the "crisis" of which the preliminary report of the Royal Commission spoke. Canadian students have discovered this necessity after many years' experience, and this experience by itself fully warrants the submission of this brief.



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INTRODUCTION

This submission, presented to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism on behalf of the Canadian Union of Students, is an outline of the relations between English-speaking and French-speaking students within the framework of the Canadian Union of Students (formerly the National Federation of Canadian University Students). An analysis of this history, together with the prospects for the future relationship between CUS and the Union Générale des Etudiants du Québec, (UGEQ) is also included.

No attempt is made within these pages to draw parallels to the overall Canadian scene, and it will be up to the Commissioners to interpret and extract what they feel bears a relationship to the future of Canada as a country. One basic fact is certainly evident. There is a fundamental need on the part of Canadians of every walk of life to recognize those factors which unite and those which divide Canadians of English and French expression. Until discussion and action once again takes place in the area of fundamentals, in the area of motivation and response rather than structures and formulae, Canada will continue to immerse itself more deeply in the "crisis" of which the preliminary report of the Royal Commission spoke. Canadian students have discovered this necessity after many years' experience, and this experience by itself fully warrants the submission of this brief.





SUBMISSION OF THE CANADIAN UNION OF STUDENTS  
TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON BILINGUALISM AND  
BICULTURALISM

Preamble

1. Since its foundation in 1926, CUS has provided many interesting examples of cooperation and conflict between English-speaking and French-speaking students in Canada. As a voluntary organization which has grouped the majority of Canadian students, it has been a laboratory for the efforts of young people of both language groups to find a successful and fruitful modus vivendi. Therefore it is the feeling of CUS that an effective analysis of its own history can be of value to the Royal Commission in their task of assessing and interpreting the trends and prospects in Canadian biculturalism.
2. Because CUS is a voluntary organization, it has had to base its success in a large measure on the willingness of local student councils to associate themselves to the national body. This has meant that CUS has been a viable organization only to the extent that it has been able to satisfy and encourage the aims and





aspirations of each member Student Council. Unity within CUS is based on the fragile reality of mutual self-respect as well as a positive and concrete interchange of ideas, with each student council preserving its essential and unique character.

The many ups and downs of the organization indicate that it has often failed to fulfill its function, either because of inefficiency due to lack of financial resources and dynamic leadership, or because of a disastrous inability to interpret the trends and developments in the Canadian student community. But what becomes clear through the tangled history of affiliation and withdrawal of many member institutions of CUS is that the problem of Canadian student unity was always central in the minds of student leaders of the time. Despite the many setbacks that the organization has suffered through its long history, it has continued to grow and expand to meet the present needs of a more interested and dynamic Canadian student community.

3. It is important to note at this stage that education in Canada, and therefore the organization of the national student community, is oriented on bicultural lines. Therefore no reference can be made in this report to other minority groups and their place within the Canadian context. Our analysis and recommendations are oriented purely toward the French and English speaking



traditions as they are reflected in the educational structure of Canada. This is in keeping with the first recommendation made by CUS in its preliminary submission of November 7, 1963, which stated: "We recommend that only the French-speaking and English-speaking groups are to be considered in the deliberations of the Commission. Any reference to other cultural groups should be made only with respect to either the French or English cultural groups as is implicit in the very name of the Commission. It is very important that this distinction be made clear. Indeed, making this clear to all Canada will be one of the major functions of this Commission."

#### Pre-1946 History

4. The efforts of NFCUS in the period between 1926 and 1946 were mainly directed toward consolidating a stable national organization and introducing active programs in the area of interregional scholarships, debating and athletics. The Federation did not see a role for itself in promoting student awareness of pressing social issues, but felt itself more confined to the area of student service and internal matters. This failure to play a part in the creation of an active Canadian student identity lead to the information of the rival Canadian Student Assembly in 1937. This organization was dedicated to the formation of this awareness, and stated in its aims that it existed





not as a rival but as a complement to NFCUS. Both organizations eventually merged at the outbreak of the Second War and this marked the beginning of a vital interest on the part of NFCUS in the problems of higher education and social consciousness.

5. During these early years, the Université de Montréal and Université Laval were affiliated to the Federation. The Université de Montréal belonged between the years 1926 and 1937. It is an indication of the inability of the NFCUS Secretariat of that time to fully understand and cater to the interests of French Canadian students that it described in one of its monthly news bulletin of 1937 that the Université de Montréal was "a bilingual institution unlike the University of Quebec" and called Montréal the French section of McGill. Montréal understandably took strong exception to this reference, and withdrew from the organization. It rejoined shortly thereafter, to withdraw again in 1940 with the Université Laval over the issue of conscription.

6. The 1940 incident centered on the questionnaire which the National Secretariat circulated to all member campuses requesting a polling of student opinion on their attitude towards conscription. The French universities had not been consulted before the questionnaire was distributed, and as a result the





two French universities saw this as a move to obtain the English majoritarian opinion in favour of conscription in order to submerge the obviously intransigent position of French Canada on the issue. They well understood that the majority of students in the Federation were English-speaking, and that most of them would favour conscription. It is difficult to understand why the Secretariat did not seek the opinions of the French universities before proceeding with this project. This serves as a first indication of the type of divisive issue which compounded with quick action on the part of the Secretariat was to produce the basic conditions of conflict between the two cultural groups.

7. One other point is worthy of note during this period, and that is that all correspondence between the Secretariat and the French universities was conducted in the English language. This occurred even in instances where the representatives of the two French speaking members were barely conversant in English. This situation effectively existed well into the 1950's, and can be cited as one of the major reasons for French-speaking institutions considering NFCUS as an organization within whose framework they scarcely felt at home. The reasons for this situation existing are certainly not grounded in any ill will on the part of the officers of the Federation, but are



probably due to a simple lack of financial resources, technical expertise and the elusive and intangible "French Canadian mentality". However, when it is considered that one of the fundamental rights of French Canadians is the use of their own language within the context of a national organization, it is appalling, for example, that the notice of withdrawal issued by the Université de Montréal and the Université Laval in 1940 had to be written in English.

#### The First Post-War Decade (1946-1956)

8. Because of the failure of member universities to pay their dues to NFCUS in the year 1945-46, the real history of the post-war organization dates from the December 1946 conference. At that time Maurice Sauvé was elected president, and his term of office must stand out as a landmark in the drive toward cementing the structure and program of NFCUS. The establishment of a local NFCUS Committee on each campus was to serve as a means of implementing the program decided by each Congress and also of disseminating information about the organization to each individual student. Maurice Sauvé's tour of Canadian campuses was instrumental in increasing the membership of NFCUS to approximately 65,000 students and in bringing the programs of the organization to the attention of the students and Student Councils across the country.





9. A direct result of the post war euphoria was an awakening on the part of students everywhere to their rights and responsibilities not only with respect to the university community but to society as a whole. The main event in this developing student awareness was the "Charte de Grenoble" adopted by the National Congress of the Union Nationale des Etudiants de France in 1946. It became the essential guideline for the philosophy of student syndicalism throughout Europe. In his report to the 1947 NFCUS, Maurice Sauvé made specific reference to the role of student syndicalism in the Canadian student movement. He stated: "We believe that as an intellectual, the student has proper rights and duties added to those that are common to all other workers. It is therefore evident that the most pressing task of a National Union of Students is to promote these particular rights of a student and to awaken their consciousness to the correlative duties. We firmly believe that student syndicalism should be very positive. Its objective, during the intermediary phases before the elusive concept of unity is attained, is to create the necessary union for effective action on a maximum number of points. Student syndicalism has the essential task of increasing the number of common points on which a united stand can be taken and to create an atmosphere of confidence and friendship in stimulating efforts of intelligence and understanding." This thinking represents





a viewpoint which at the time was probably far in advance of the ideas entertained by the majority of delegates to a NFCUS conference. It suggested in essence that the National Union of Students must be a dynamic and forceful vehicle for social change both in the university community and in society. Unless NFCUS could achieve this stature, in the eyes of President Sauvé, it was ultimately doomed to failure.

10. Because of the close cultural affinity which existed between students in Quebec and students in France, it was logical that the ideas embodied in the "Charte de Grenoble" should receive acceptance there before they had fully permeated thinking in English Canada. However, President Sauvé's comments in 1947 are indicative of the trend which existed at that time, and was to exist for the next decade, in the minds of French Canadian student leaders. Their ultimate desire was to create a student movement in Canada which would be strong and effective in its efforts to educate and serve its students. Essentially two choices were open. Either a strong NFCUS was to exist, or there was absolutely no reason for the maintenance of a National Union of Students in Canada. Expensive annual meetings to discuss programs of debating, athletics and student exchanges were somewhat less than valuable if they were not accompanied by a marked increase in activity on the part



of NFCUS as a pressure group for making the student's viewpoint known both to government and to the general community.

11. Following the 1947 conference, Maurice Sauvé's ideas were relegated to the limbo of the NFCUS archives. Annual contributions by member institutions continued to be inadequate, and consequently the organization was unable to rise out of the doldrums into which it had sunk for so many years. Even on the question of the establishment of a permanent Secretariat with one or more full time employees, the member institutions could not reach agreement and year after year postponed making a definite decision. It was only in 1951 that a permanent Secretariat was finally established at Carleton College.
12. Even then, this move was somewhat belated. At the 1952 National Congress, the Université de Montréal was demanding that in order to have a truly effective national organization, the per capita levy should be raised from 20¢ to \$1.00 per student. It is clear that the long delay in establishing a permanent Secretariat had placed thinking in English Canada and French Canada out of step by approximately four or five years. At a time when English Canada was only beginning to accustom itself to the idea of a permanent staff for NFCUS, the French speaking universities were already thinking in terms of a





strong national pressure group which in order to serve its students well would have to be financed by a greatly increased donation on the part of member institutions. The ideas of student syndicalism which had first been stated by President Sauvé in 1947 had received some currency at the Université de Montréal, specifically in an extensive review published in "Le Quartier Latin" of December 11, 1952. It is worthwhile to quote this article in part: "Quand, par la FNEUC, les étudiants du Canada se connaîtront d'avantage nous pourrons demander à la Fédération Nationale réunie en congrès d'établir une charte qui en ferait notre unique représentant auprès du gouvernement et de ses services, lui faisant connaître les intentions des étudiants canadiens réunis en syndicats avec tous les avantages que cette situation comporte: Reconnaissance par le gouvernement et par les autorités universitaires de nos revendications et des moyens légaux mis à la dispositions de tous syndicats pour faire respecter ses revendications."

13. It is evident, then, that at this stage French Canadian students continued to be interested in a vibrant and forceful national student organization on the Canadian level which would at least in a major part answer and respect the aspirations of French Canadian students. When the National Congress of NFCUS refused to increase the per capita levy to the amount suggested by the



Université de Montréal, the latter withdrew from the organization. This move was basically sincere and positive, in the sense that the Université de Montréal promised to return once thinking within NFCUS had progressed to the stage where students everywhere recognized the need for a dynamic and organized student movement which could legitimately serve the interests and needs of students everywhere.

14. In all the discussions and policies which had been adopted up to this time, one particular trend is evident. Negotiations had never progressed beyond the stage of establishing an orientation and a structure for NFCUS. This meant that any proposals for programs and activities which would lead to a true Canadian student unity had not been aired. French Canadian students felt then, as they do now, that a strong structure and orientation was essential in order that the national student organization could proceed with meaningful programs. On the other hand, English Canadian students were more inclined to favour establishing programs without a framework of existing policies and of course within the context of the existing structure of NFCUS. As the end of the first post-war decade was reached, debate between French speaking and English speaking students began to center more and more on the question of structures, and because of the large amount of time spent at each annual





conference on this debate, there was little or no time to ever truly investigate the basic sources of disagreement or difference between the two groups. The beginning of this period of structural debate was the proposal of the Université Laval in February 1956, which will be dealt with in the next section.

15. Mention should also be made here of the involvement of NFCUS in presenting briefs to the Federal Government during this period on the question of direct aid to higher education. One of the recurrent dilemmas which has faced NFCUS throughout its history has been the manner of involvement of a national organization in the field of education, constitutionally a matter of exclusive provincial jurisdiction. There is no question but that some of the policies adopted by NFCUS, while taken in the interest of benefitting students everywhere by increasing aid to higher education, were often aggravating to French-speaking students because of their distinct federal orientation.
16. In 1949, when NFCUS presented a brief calling for federal aid to higher education, there was no immediate reaction from member institutions. However, the following year the Université de Montréal went on record as opposing federal aid to education



as outlined in this brief and in the report of the Massey Commission. It decided to abstain from debates on these issues in the interest of preserving national unity and appearing to the rest of Canada as "good fellows". Because of this desire to ingratiate themselves to their fellow students, the Université de Montréal did not invoke by-law 8 of the NFCUS constitution, which stated: "No opinion on national affairs reflecting upon the constituent members shall be voiced by the officers of the Federation without the unanimous approval of the constituent members." It appears that only a lack of desire by the Université de Montréal to press the issue at this particular time prevented a full-scale debate with its resulting set-back within the Federation. This position by the AGEUM\* was the first of a long line of policies which were to stress exclusive provincial responsibility in the field of education and which the Federation would ignore at its own peril. In 1953, the abstention of McGill, Sir George Williams, Laval and Bishop's (the Université de Montréal, as observers, also abstained) were further indications of the separate trend in educational policy which the province of Quebec had long chosen to follow. Whereas the other nine provinces were prepared to accept federal aid to higher education

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\* (Association générale des étudiants de l'Université de Montréal)





under certain conditions, the Quebec position remained that of excluding the Federal Government from any involvement in the field of education. In order to counter the trend within NFCUS toward increase federal aid, the Quebec region in 1953-54 attempted to launch its own campaign within the province in support of increased aid to higher education.

17. The decision of the 1954 Congress to give priority to a national campaign of publicity on the Massey Report recommendations necessarily excluded the Quebec Region from participation in the Federation's most important activity. Undoubtedly this made the important activities of NFCUS less meaningful to the students of Quebec, who were obliged to conduct their own campaign within the province in favour of increased bursaries and financial assistance to the university. The constitutional issue of responsibility in the field of education was only mentioned in passing in the brief submitted by NFCUS during the 1954-55 period, and it is quite obvious from the need for separate action by the Quebec Region that a really flexible policy had not been formulated by the national organization. Attempts were made in the text of the briefs to emphasize provincial responsibility by calling on the Federal Government to ensure the agreement of all the provinces as to the method of disbursement of funds to higher education. However, no mention



is made of the possibility that one province might choose to accept financial assistance under another form than might be accepted by another province. In short, the procedure of separate agreements had not yet been given currency either by the government or by the students.

#### The approaching crisis 1956-1963

18. When in February 1956 the Université Laval presented its proposals for NFCUS reform, the emphasis had already changed from creating a strong national student movement to creating specific regions within the national framework which would be able to carry out well defined programs and institute their own policies. The history of NFCUS up to that point had suggested that the national organization was worthwhile and essential, and that it could perform valuable service in particular areas such as debating, athletics, interregional scholarship exchanges and international affairs. However, it must have been clear to the French-speaking universities at this point that if their particular viewpoint in the field of education was to be voiced it would have to be through a provincial organization in Quebec which could deal directly with the provincial government. Also many matters peculiar to French-speaking students could best be considered by a cultural organization





grouping French students throughout Canada. In this light, the requests of Laval for a division of responsibilities between the regions and the national office appeared reasonable. The structure recommended was an exact reproduction in many ways of the Canadian federal system in that a certain percentage of the per capita levy was to accrue to the region and the remainder to the national organization, as well as the fact that responsibilities were clearly delineated between both levels of organization.

19. Laval also emphasized one point which was to become an important issue in each successive year. This was the possibility of integrating the classical colleges in Quebec into the structure of the Federation. It was reasonable to assume that since the Federation grouped students of post-secondary standing, that classical colleges should also be permitted to affiliate themselves. In addition, the feeling was current among French-speaking students in Quebec that there was a strong bond of affinity between university students and classical colleges students, and that together they should participate in any national organization. Paul Piché's recommendation (on behalf of Laval) that the French university students and the classical college students organized themselves into a Federation which would eventually become one of two federa-



tions forming a Confederation of Canadian university students was a prelude to future requests for the creation of two sovereign organizations based on cultural and linguistic considerations with a confederal superstructure to unite the two. That this structure would be unacceptable to the rest of the NFCUS membership was apparent, but the central question of the affiliation of classical colleges remained relevant. There is little doubt today that had NFCUS worked actively for the formation of representative and independent student governments on the classical college level with a view to their eventual affiliation in one form or another to the Federation, there would have been a marked increase in French-speaking membership with a consequent improvement of understanding and rapport between both French and English speaking students. However, each succeeding National Congress merely mandated the Université de Montréal and Université Laval to study the possibility of integrating the classical colleges into the organization. Perhaps because of lack of technical resources and staff the Federation itself did not pursue the matter any further.

20. The National Federation had now progressed to the stage where discussion of fundamental issues of agreement and difference between French and English-speaking students had been submerged beneath a recurring and intense debate on the structures of



the organization. The overriding consideration in any set of proposals was whether the recommendations were acceptable to both groups and not so much whether they corresponded to the basic aims and aspirations of Canadian students of both language expressions. This structural debate was further complicated by internal divisions within both language groups, such as that between the Université de Montréal and Université Laval.

21. The set of recurring demands and responses on both sides could only lead to a feeling of mistrust of the other's motives, a hardening of positions and the consequent and inevitable compromises which left neither side completely satisfied. When a process of demand - acceptance - refusal-compromise is set up between two groups who feel individually that they are in an inadequate position with respect to the other, there is no room for mutual respect and trust. It is inevitable that one or three the other will tire of interminable debate and counter-proposal, and seek a full development of its aims and aspirations in other areas, usually through the formation of a separate and sovereign organization.





22. Thus one of the necessary ingredients to achieving a full and permanent understanding of the other point of view lies in the destruction and abandonment of prejudice and fear of power political motives on both sides. French Canadian students have always desired a forceful vehicle whereby their aspirations may be given a full hearing. This feeling within NFCUS had its real beginning in the words of Maurice Sauvé in 1947, and increased in vigour over the intervening years. It was only when they began to acknowledge that a viable and dynamic French Canadian voice on the national level was difficult if not impossible, that they turned to the formation of their own structures.
23. On the other hand, there is no doubt that many of the individuals from French Canada who were involved in executive capacities in the Federation over the years did not devote their full capacities either to interpreting the views of French Canadian students to each National Congress or to sounding out and organizing the development of thinking among French Canadian students. Whether this is due to inefficiency on the part of these officers or to a genuine lack of interest promoted by the insurmountable difficulties which they faced in presenting a radical viewpoint to the national organization is very much in doubt.



24. The formation in February 1957 of the Association canadienne des universitaires de langue française" (ACULF) was a very real expression of the developing sentiments of French Canadian students. The fact that it did not develop as a dynamic French Canadian organization is perhaps due to the reticence of Laval to give its wholehearted support to ACULF at the expense of NFCUS. Laval insisted very strongly that its support was given to ACULF on condition that the Université de Montréal reaffiliated with NFCUS. This is distinctly in accord with Paul Piché's recommendation of 1956 to the effect that a French Canadian student organization must still participate in a pan-Canadian structure. ACULF failed to become dynamic because of the restrictive view with which it was regarded by its member universities. Its activities were confined to the cultural level, while NFCUS continued to be active in national and international affairs. French Canadian student leaders recognized that if they wished to have their opinions heard on these latter issues they would have to present them through the machinery of NFCUS. This immediately affected ACULF's possibility for success.

25. But even when ACULF collapsed and those French universities which had withdrawn from NFCUS reaffiliated, nothing concrete was done to study and act upon the very real grievances which





had caused the creation of a separate French Canadian organization. It would be safe to say that the calls by NFCUS for responsibility and loyalty to the national organization were not offset by a concomitant call upon the organization to respect and understand the wishes and desires of individual members, particularly those of French expression. The French universities once again became members of NFCUS, but nothing was done to ensure that the causes which had created the rift would not recur. Obviously it was inevitable that they would under those circumstances.

26. During the latter part of the 50's further seeds of dissension were sown by the Federation's policy in the area of education. It was understandable that in 1958 the French-speaking universities in Quebec, then in full conflict with the Premier of the province over increased aid to higher education, should support the national organization in its demands for increased federal aid. However, this appears to have been a temporary desperation measure designed to combat rising fees in the province of Quebec and to by-pass the intransigent Quebec government. As soon as relations with the Quebec government began to normalize in 1959 and 1960, the French-speaking Quebec universities returned to their normal position of favouring exclusive provincial jurisdiction in the field of



education. The national organization, however, did not take this fluctuation of position into account in defining its policies over this period of time. The January 1958 brief to the Federal Government on government aid to higher education was followed by similar submissions in March 1959 and in 1960. Meanwhile, the submissions of the universities in Quebec under the name of the Quebec Region of NFCUS to the provincial government indicated once again that a separate policy on education was in evidence in Quebec. Nonetheless, the 1960 Congress at Dalhousie mandated the preparation of a brief to the Federal Government calling for 10,000 bursaries of \$600. each to be provided from the Federal coffers. When this brief was finally produced in early 1961, it created an immense furor within the province of Quebec. They felt that the resolution of the Dalhousie Congress which had strongly supported provincial jurisdiction in the field of education had been seriously violated in the final text of the brief. As a result, the Universities of Montréal, Laval, Sherbrooke and Moncton dissociated themselves from it. This 1961 proposal for a National Bursary Plan was the climax to the other submissions by NFCUS in support of federal aid to education. It demonstrated to the French-speaking universities that even with the backing of a specific Congress resolution, they could not place sufficient confidence in the National Secretariat to ensure that their



wishes and rights would be protected. On a question as delicate as the right of the Federal Government to make a financial contribution either to the provinces or directly to the universities, there was a need for full and continuous consultation on both sides in order that the terms of the resolution would be respected and in order that no conflicts could develop. This was not done, and further fuel was added to the fire of distrust which now evidently existed between French and English-speaking students.

27. If French-speaking students could not place their confidence in the officers of the Federation or the employees of the Secretariat, there was one other avenue open to maintain a unified Canadian structure. This was to request that certain personnel of French origin be employed in the Secretariat as a parallel guarantee against further infringements, and that adequate French-speaking representation be ensured on the Executive of NFCUS. In other words, a structure was being evolved which was based on a deep-seated mistrust on the part of both language groups. Whereas it is desirable and even essential that a structure be a manifestation of a basic desire to cooperate and a fundamental respect for the other person's viewpoint, the exact opposite was now being effected on the level of the national organization. As early as 1961,





then, the approach which would ultimately lead to a parting of ways had been set in motion.

28. At the 1961 Congress at Queen's the National Bursary Plan fiasco lead to the formation of a Structures Committee chaired by Bob Carswell of McGill University. The Commission recognized many of the basic problems which were the cause of differences between French and English-speaking students, but for two reasons they were unable to recommend anything other than a change in the structure of NFCUS. First, the mandate which had been given them at the Queen's Congress confined them to a study and report on modifications to the existing structure of NFCUS; and second, the aims and ambitions of the two groups were by that time so widely divergent that the only means of accommodating them within a single structure was to provide that as much as possible they express their peculiar viewpoints independently.

29. The Commission made one of its clearest and most definitive statements on the elements which could unite the Canadian student community when it said: "The fact that we are all students is something which unites us; the universality of the search for knowledge does in fact transcend nations and peoples, and this search and the search for ways to help our



students must not be impeded by racial or national divisions, nor on the other hand by attempts to impose an artificial and one-sided concept of 'unity' upon the minority group". This statement implied that only in a collective search for common goals could students find cause for a unified structure. There is no reason for the existence of a structure uniting students unless those students freely associate themselves together for the attainment of a common end. From the history of NFCUS, it should have been quite clear that the aims of each language group had been drifting apart and becoming further separated for many years. The logical question which stems from this realization is whether the façade of unity was worth preserving when the fundamental desire to cooperate had been diluted to the point of disappearance.

30. Despite some of the far-reaching implications of the Carswell Commission Report and the sincere and honest attempt which it made to rectify a difficult situation, its recommendations were almost entirely ignored by the 1962 NFCUS Congress at Sherbrooke. That Congress chose instead to authorize the hiring of a French-speaking Associate Secretary who would be charged with carrying out specific projects for the benefit of French Canadian students solely. This certainly can be interpreted as a positive step in the direction of providing





a distinct service to French Canadian students, but the fact that the individual to fill this position was not secured until the summer of 1963 largely mitigated its chances of success. In fact, it caused further division because now all relations with French Canada were handled by or at least through the Associate Secretary. This had the effect of detaching the Federation more fully from the French students.

31. One proposal at the Sherbrooke Congress which was a valid and basic attempt to bring into line the aims and principles of the French and English-speaking student communities was the proposal for a Charter of the students of Canada. This draft Charter was to be studied by each region within NFCUS during the subsequent year, and final ratification given at the 1963 Congress. Its text basically stated the principles of student syndicalism as outlined in the "Charte de Grenoble". Within the context of what has been set forth in this report so far, it can be considered as the most constructive effort put forward by students anywhere to solve the basic problem of Canadian student unity. It had no reference whatsoever to the structural make-up of NFCUS, and by by-passing this latter consideration, it attacked the core of the differences which separated French and English-speaking students. It sought to establish in writing a statement of the common goals of the



Canadian student community - those goals which in the means to their attainment could unite students everywhere. In addition, it was a logical consequence of the notion set forth in the Carswell Commission Report, stated above, that the very condition of being a student and of facing the problems and challenges which are peculiar to the everyday life of the student, was the basic factor in the drive for unity. However, it was rejected and discarded by the Western Region, the Ontario Region and the Maritime Region, and only passed through the Quebec Region after a heated session of debate and amendment inspired by the English-speaking universities and colleges in that region. English-speaking students, perhaps justly so, were unprepared to set down their aims in a written document. The Anglo-Saxon tradition of pragmatic common law evolution was still too strong to permit ready acceptance of a Charter.

#### The year of crisis 1963-1964

32. In March 1963, the Provisional Committee for the formation of the Union Générale des Etudiants de Québec (UGEQ) was established by the three French universities in the province of Quebec. This was the ultimate indication that the new revolution in Quebec was motivating students there to establish



their own framework of cooperation to work for their particular ends. The new UGEQ would satisfy a number of aspirations of French Canadian students within the province:

1. to unite into one organization all Quebec students attending university, classical college, normal school and technological institutes;
2. to work actively for the development and implementation of a new educational scheme for Quebec;
3. to participate actively in the growth of a new and dynamic Quebec society;
4. to provide a vehicle for the full participation of French students within the province in questions of international and universal import.

To this extent the revolution in thinking within the governmental, economic and intellectual circles of Quebec had brought students there to a better-defined understanding and statement of what precisely they aspired to inside the framework of an organized student movement. If the gradual disillusionment of French Canadian students with the organization of NFCUS had been the causative factor in an ultimate split of the Canadian student community, the organization and codification of French student thinking brought on by the rapid process of social change within Quebec was the final catalyst which brought it about.





33. It is still somewhat difficult to understand why French Canadian student leaders brought demands for the restructurization of NFCUS to the 1963 Edmonton Congress. Perhaps it was because the definition of UGEQ had not proceeded to a sufficiently advanced degree to permit its establishment at that time, and it was felt that until the student organizations in the classical colleges and the normal schools were organized on a solid basis to permit their affiliation to UGEQ that continued demands for a total revarping of NFCUS should be pressed.

Whatever the cause, French Canadian student leaders came to the Congress in Edmonton demanding that NFCUS be totally restructured along the lines of two separate organizations, one for English Canada and the other for French Canada, with an overall superstructure to unite the two. Each cultural group would be sovereign in every respect, and would assign duties and financial resources to the Confederal Canadian Union as it saw fit and necessary.

34. That this alternative was in the main unacceptable to English Canadian students became evident in the days prior to the Congress. During the initial period of the Congress, the French Canadian delegates chose to sit down with their English Canadian counterparts to discuss a possible compromise solution to this set of demands. The end result, after long and



intensive hours of closed-door debates among small groups of students, was a temporary structure which at first glance appeared to answer many of the demands originally set forth. A Structures Commission was to study, over the course of the following year, a structural framework which would permanently implement the principles of sovereign dualism accepted by the Congress. The text of the compromise solution was embodied in appendix 25 of the Edmonton Congress which stood forth at the time as the only means of preserving a truly bicultural and universally representative organization.

35. In retrospect, it would seem that both groups extracted a far different meaning from its content, and this fundamental misunderstanding, persisting over the course of a year led to a final and formal parting of ways. French Canadian students understood the Canadian Union of Students (the new name adopted to replace NFCUS) as a superstructure which grouped two free, independent and sovereign unions devoted to matters of specific and peculiar interest to the respective language groups. English Canadians thought of the new CUS as a unified organization with two caucuses meeting annually to discuss matters of internal interest. They could not fathom the superstructure notion, and perhaps justly so when considering the vague entity which was defined as English Canada. They did





not feel that they could ever accept the idea without witnessing the effective dissolution of Canadian student unity.

36. What was lacking in their understanding was the need to recognize that French Canadian students were vitally and primarily interested in an organization in which they would be the majority influence and within which they could collaborate with their fellow students from the classical colleges, the normal schools and the technological institutes in the promotion of a dynamic program of student syndicalism. The desire on the part of English Canadian students to preserve one structure blinded them somewhat to the possibility that cooperation could be more easily accessible were French Canadians able to act from a position of sovereignty and mutual self-respect. French Canadian students sought the reassurance that English Canada for once understood and accepted their right of free association and their right to develop institutional frameworks to the fullest measure.

37. The degree to which English Canadian students misinterpreted the far reaching consequences of the new structure which they had adopted at Edmonton was the way in which CUS continued almost unaltered during the academic year 1963-64. Only the Board of Directors, now composed of an equal number of French



and English-speaking students, gave any indication that deep-seated change had been initiated at the Edmonton Congress. This Board still discussed a program for CUS which was essentially similar to that of the pre-Edmonton NFCUS organization. The structural framework of the Secretariat continued without any appreciable change. It was inevitable that under these circumstances a definite disillusionment on the part of the French-speaking Board members would set in. And even had this disillusionment not been conditioned, it was increasingly evident from the number of French Canadian absences from Board meetings that there was a real lack of interest on the part of French Canadian students in making the new structure operate effectively for the rapprochement of French and English student ideals.

38. The Structures Commission which met throughout the 1963-64 academic year recommended the maintenance of a single national student organization, with equality of voting rights given to French Canadian students on certain fundamental issues. It noted in its final report that "the essential fact is the tremendous spirit of urgency which characterizes the French-speaking student community of Quebec today". It acknowledged the principal of dualism as meaning "that English Canadians must give not grudging acceptance to this principle, but must



accord to it the fullest respect. It also means that French-speaking students must not withdraw into a narrow French-speaking framework, but must continue to seek cooperation and mutual assistance with their English-speaking colleagues."

Unfortunately any of the ideas and recommendations presented in this report were never to be discussed, as the universities of Montréal, Laval and Sherbrooke signified their intention to withdraw from CUS before the report could be discussed at the 1964 Congress. This is indicative of the fact that the rift had developed to such an extent that no longer was it possible to propose moderate and well-intentioned solutions.

39. Following closely upon the CUS support for the proposed Canada Student Loan Plan the French-speaking universities reiterated once and for all their policy that education was an exclusively provincial matter and that CUS had adopted a policy which favoured federal aid to higher education in one form or another. It is interesting to note, however, that in the brief present by the AGEUM Executive to the AGEUM Council on withdrawal from CUS, no reference was made to the CUS stand on the Student Loan Plan. On the other hand, frequent reference was made to the 1961 brief calling for a National Bursary Plan. This brief still loomed as the most serious affront to Quebec's stand on jurisdiction in the field of education. CUS's position





on the 1964 Federal Loan Plan was merely a small reiteration of an unacceptable CUS policy, even though the 1964 position was more firmly based on respect for provincial wishes than the 1961 brief had been.

#### Conclusion

40. "Any constitutional framework, no matter how elaborate, ultimately rests on the goodwill and cooperation of its builders and practitioners. In attempting to draft a satisfactory structure for the Canadian Union of Students, therefore, the Commission on Structures has based all its suggestions on the absolute necessity for the existence of a healthy community of interest within CUS." This principle as stated in the 1964 report of the Structures Commission sets forth concisely the essential ingredients for the erection of a meaningful and effective structure for Canadian student cooperation. It indicates that a structure is the direct result of a fundamental desire on the part of students everywhere to cooperate voluntarily in the attainment of certain common goals. If in the first case there is no desire to cooperate among the students of both language groups, then a unified structure is unattainable. Secondly, if the goals of the two groups are dissimilar, no structural framework of cooperation is possible. Finally, it



is essential that the right of students to freely associate themselves for common ends, even at the expense of a façade of national student unity, be recognized.

41. Throughout this report frequent references have been made to NFCUS/CUS policy in the field of higher education. This does not indicate that this area is the one which produced the most frequent cause for discord. Rather it has been used as an example to illustrate how French and English-speaking students have often been unable to understand some of the true differences which distinguish them.
42. This report has attempted to show that the demise of French-English student cooperation within one structural unity was not the result of one particular set of events but rather the culmination of a long evolution of lack of communication leading to misunderstanding. The ultimate result cannot be ascribed to any one particular generation of student leaders or to the structures and programs which they established. It is instead a compendium of incidents stretching over the entire period of NFCUS/CUS history. At first it involved a failure to work actively for the creation of a dynamic national student movement. Later it developed into a recurring debate on structures and institutions with little or no reference to



the real motives for French and English-speaking students to remain together and to cooperate. As soon as the dialogue reached the level of a debate on structure, to the exclusion of all else, the fate of future French-English cooperation was sealed.

43. Because the ultimate result of CUS history to date has been the division of the Canadian student community into a French-speaking organization (the Union Générale des Etudiants du Québec) and a predominantly English-speaking organization (CUS), this report has sought to be fairly frank in assessing the failures of NFCUS/CUS in taking up the challenge of creating a true and lasting Canadian student unity. On the other hand, NFCUS/CUS has had many successes in developing and growing as an organization over these many years. The membership, strength and outlook of the organization has consistently expanded, and there is every reason to believe it will continue to do so.

#### Prospects for the Future

44. The question of understanding and mutual respect between French and English-speaking students today is centered on the possibilities of a close collaboration between CUS and the new UGEQ.





45. During the year 1964-65, relations between CUS and UGEQ were of a very rudimentary nature. This was largely due to the fact that UGEQ was not founded until November 1964, and that CUS had not adopted a specific policy on relations with UGEQ at the 1964 York Congress. At York, because the impact of the withdrawal of the French universities was still extremely fresh, the delegates were more concerned with establishing a strong and dynamic program for CUS in an effort to remove any ill effects which the withdrawal might have had on the efficient operation of CUS. Any decisions on cooperating with UGEQ would have to wait until that organization had been officially established and functioning over a period of time.

46. Several attempts were made during this past year to establish programs of cooperation with UGEQ, specifically in the area of the Canada Student Means Survey and the Interregional Scholarship Exchange Program. Both overtures met with rebuffs. This can be generally ascribed to two reasons. First, both programs were organized by the Canadian Union of Students and therefore UGEQ participation in them would necessarily have to be on CUS terms. Second, the experience of belonging to CUS was still sufficiently close to the new officers of UGEQ to make them feel that internal organization and structurization would have to take priority over joint programs with the old



"parent body". In other words, the traumatic experience of the long structural debates of the previous few years was still sufficiently fresh in the minds of the UGEQ officers to cast some suspicion on the motives of a CUS which had not elaborated a specific policy toward UGEQ.

47. The Founding Congress of UGEQ in November 1964 was largely devoted to the establishment of a charter, a declaration of rights and responsibilities of the Quebec student and a constitution for UGEQ. In the final report of that Congress, only three of the sixty-four printed pages were devoted to program resolutions, the rest of the space being taken up with the text of the basic documents mentioned above. The top priority at the time was obviously to establish a structure which would permit UGEQ to develop a sound and far-reaching program within its own milieu. Even the important question of international affiliation was handled by refusing formal participation in either the International Student Conference or the International Union of Students. Full attention was to be given instead to bilateral relations with other National Unions of Students and the formation of a third international movement centered on the developing countries. In short, the Founding Congress of UGEQ was internal and organizational, with little attention being given to the framework of cooperation which would exist



between itself and other National Unions of Students, above all CUS.

48. With these events past, the 29th Congress of the Canadian Union of Students, which took place in Lennoxville from August 29th to September 4th, 1965, approached the question of relations with UGEQ with an extremely open mind. Primary in the minds of most of the delegates was the necessity for creating a climate wherein strong and positive links could be established between CUS and UGEQ. The policy resolution which resulted was a distinct departure from many of the old reservations and fears about the existence of a separate student movement in Quebec. The text of the resolution is as follows:

This Congress, recognizing UGEQ as a legitimate National Union of Students within the latter's own definition, mandates the President of CUS to explore all areas of mutual concern with the aim of effecting cooperative action with that Union.

This resolution was adopted by a wide margin, and served as an indication of a new and open spirit which pervaded the debates at this CUS Congress. It formally acknowledged the equality of CUS and UGEQ, basing its conclusion on the right of students everywhere to unite for the attainment of common aims on all levels. It reasserted the basic principle of freedom of association, and in a sense held the recognition





of UGEQ on an equal basis to be the basic and essential feature of cooperative action between CUS and UGEQ.

49. Two student organizations now exist in Canada, and they exist as a testimony to the differences between students of English expression and students of French expression. The delegates at the Lennoxville Congress held no delusions about the effect of this fact upon the future of Canada as a country. To speak of Canada as a country meant that students had to talk about means of strengthening and expanding those factors which can and must unite students everywhere. The student movement is built on ideals, aspirations and resulting programs of action. The only relevant reason why students represented by CUS and students represented by UGEQ should come together in a joint program is that they collectively seek the attainment of a common aim and are prepared to use similar means to attain that end. Because of their common bond of studenthood, the areas in which there is possible agreement are many. They include policies on education, the government of the university, projects of community development, student exchanges and international programs such as South Africa and Viet Nam. When representatives of CUS and UGEQ sit down to discuss cooperation in any of these areas, they are essentially attempting to find

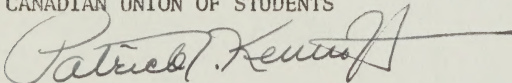


unifying principles which can lead to common action. This spirit is so different from that which pervaded debates at so many previous NFCUS/CUS Congresses as to be almost unrecognizable.

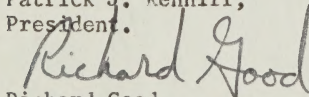
50. To conclude then, if there is to be any contact between CUS and UGEO in the future, it will only be in areas where both groups can discover and elaborate a need for common action. Policies, statements and projects which contribute to closer understanding between those students represented by each National Union are highly desirable and certainly foreseeable. What is essential is that both unions are now working in a spirit of mutual respect for the other's sovereignty and freedom of movement. This has created a healthy atmosphere in which prospects for the future can only be optimistic.

Respectfully submitted,

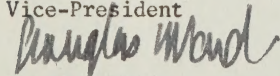
CANADIAN UNION OF STUDENTS



Patrick J. Kenniff,  
President.



Richard Good,  
Vice-President



Douglas Ward  
President-elect

Ottawa, September 14, 1965









